



NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative

Justification Review

May 25, 2012

The Child Welfare Collaborative Should Be Linked To a Broader Child Welfare Workforce Initiative

Executive Summary

During the winter of 2012, the Fiscal Research Division (FRD) conducted a justification review of the NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative. Based on this review, FRD finds that the Collaborative is meeting its objectives. However, the program has not been able to impact the State's child welfare turnover rate. Nonetheless, the program appears to be fiscally sound with respect to its ability to draw upon multiple funding streams. Moreover, in the wake of funding cuts, the program has demonstrated an ability to restructure itself and maintain its production levels. Therefore, alternative (decreased) funding levels would only serve to hamper the program's ability to produce degreed child welfare social workers.

One of the goals of justification reviews is to identify policy issues that should be addressed. The Child Welfare Collaborative is part of a larger set of policies aimed at stabilizing the State's child welfare workforce. For the State to realize that goal, there is a need to reassess the Collaborative's objectives and to examine how it can be restructured to better accomplish its mission. Accomplishing those tasks would require the General Assembly to address several policy issues including aligning the Collaborative with broader initiatives, and providing direction to the state Division of Social Services regarding a restructuring of the state's social worker training infrastructure.

In light of these findings, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Re-prioritize the goals of the Child Welfare Collaborative to more consistent with the scope of the problem.
2. Link the Child Welfare Education Collaborative to a broader workforce stabilization effort that includes the Office of State Personnel and other stakeholders.
3. Examine how the Child Welfare Collaborative can be restructured to encompass a broader scope that includes training and incentives for non-social workers employed in child welfare.
4. Examine how the pre-service training program can be restructured to better accommodate the needs of County Social Services offices.